



# WEST AFRICA NETWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING

## WARN POLICY BRIEF

MARCH 25, 2013

# Is the African Giant Drowning but not Waving? – Exploring a Coordinated Approach to the Nigerian Security Challenges

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country has been enmeshed in various levels of violent conflicts since the advent of its new democratic dispensation in 1999. Nigeria's internal security challenges have become more complex. While some of the old security threats have remained or even assumed worrisome dimensions, new ones have emerged. Cross border crime especially the movement of arms, drug and human trafficking, piracy and oil bunkering in the gulf of guinea, kidnapping, and nomadic/farmer conflicts, betrays Nigeria's capacity to guarantee the security of its borders and peoples.

Generally, all the six geo-political zones of the country are bedeviled by one form of crisis or the other. The main problem in the North East is the Boko Haram crisis. The Boko Haram menace combines with ethnic and religious conflicts in the North West. In the North Central, conflicts between Fulani pastoralists and local farmers are the most prevailing. In the South East, political rivalry, kidnapping and hostage-taking threatens human security; sea piracy, oil bunkering, pipeline vandalisation are the most

popular problems in the South South while the South West faces incessant violent clashes between the factions of the National Union of Road Transport Worker (NURTW) as well as armed robbery. The main causes of these problems are adduced as poverty, religious fundamentalism, ethnic chauvinism, weak law enforcement, and elite fragmentation. The government is seen to be privileging the use of military force in dealing with the violent conflicts and this does not seem to be sufficiently and effectively responding to the issues. New problems are generated as security officials are not well coordinated and alleged to be engaged in extra judicial detention and killing of innocent citizens in many of the communities. CSOs contribute to dealing with these problems but their roles are limited to humanitarian interventions and collection of data for early warning and early response mechanisms. The CSOs do not interface their works with the state or work collaboratively with one another. In some cases their works are donor driven, largely reactive and not sustainable.

This policy brief is a product of the proceedings of a CSO consultative forum themed “**Strengthening Civil Society Engagement To Address Current Security Threats In Nigeria**” - 12th to 13th March 2013.

Participants at this meeting comprised of Civil Society Actors drawn from the 6 geo-political zones of the country including the Federal Capital Territory.

The policy brief highlights the current conflict dynamics in each of the geo political zones of the country including its implication in the West African region; it provides scenarios (best case, worst case and realistic case) and options for response.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

In terms of its size, population and contributions to international peace and security, Nigeria is a big player in the West African region and beyond. She also houses the headquarters of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and part of the African Union “Big Fives”.

It is worrisome that in the last 14 years, the country has been rocked by different forms of violent conflicts leading to destruction of human and

**“When a person is drowning and waves, he/she seeks help but without waving, the person is bound to drown”**

## West Africa Early Warning & EARLY RESPONSE Network (WARN)

The West Africa Early Warning Network (WARN) is an integral part of the West Africa Preventive Peacebuilding Program co-ordinated by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). Through its WARN Program, WANEP is setting the stage for a civil society-based early warning and response network in Africa with emphasis on human security.

WARN covers the entire Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region including Cameroon and Chad. Our focus was initially the Mano River Basin countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire. We have since expanded to cover the entire West Africa sub-region.

Since 2002, WANEP entered into an agreement with ECOWAS through the signing of a Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU) in the framework of capacity building in Conflict Prevention. One of the goals of this agreement is to interface WARN with the ECOWAS Early Warning Systems to optimize early warning conflict prevention in West Africa. In view of this development, WANEP has been operating a liaison office located at the ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria since April 2003.

In recognition of the role and achievements of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Africa, particularly in West Africa, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations at its substantive session of 2006 granted WANEP Special Consultative Status to the UN. WANEP is therefore mandated to designate official representatives to the United Nations in New York, Geneva and Vienna to further its advocacy and outreach strategies for peace and human security.

**“There are three dimensions of Boko Haram: The political, Ideological/Religious and Criminal Boko Haram”**

material national assets. The most worrisome is the ongoing religious insurgency championed by a group known as the *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lid'dawa'ati Wal Jihad* (meaning “People committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and Jihad”) otherwise known as “Boko Haram” (western education is evil)<sup>1</sup>. There are several factions of the group. One of the latest to be manifested is the *Jama'atu Ansarul Musilimina Fi Biladis Sudan* (“vanguards for the protection of Muslims in Black Africa”), which has claimed responsibility for a number of terror acts.

Efforts at containing the Boko Haram crisis have not yielded the desired results as the group still takes human lives and destroys properties worth millions of naira on regular basis. As a result of the Boko Haram crisis alone, more than 3000 people, including foreigners, have been killed. Armed militias and insurgents are

springing up in many parts of the country either to attack or to engage in a balance of terror in defence of their sectional, political or religious interests. Reports also show that in the past five years, over 10,000 people have died due to inter-communal violence in different parts of the country. In addition, over 400,000<sup>2</sup> have been internally displaced. In addition to these challenges, the prevailing level of institutionalized and systemic corruption, prolonged social dysfunctions, debilitating economic dislocations and, unresolved political imbalances, have accentuated the insecurity in the polity. Worse still, the security operatives seem to be overwhelmed by the myriad of insecurity issues and by their seeming limited capacity/resources to address these challenges. Juxtaposed to this is growing vulnerability of the security operatives especially as they are also targets of attacks by armed groups such as Boko Haram.

The nature of these conflicts and the fact that they originate from cluster of communities exposes the rapidly disintegrating traditional structures and institutions, which serve as the first line of containment or reference for conflict prevention or resolution. This traditional structure, which includes the family, traditional rulers and local government authorities, are the closest to the people. The loss of stability in these systems and structures translates to loss of grassroots security and escalation of violence, which impacts the nation as a whole.



Members of the Islamic Sect – Boko Haram

**3.0 KEY CONFLICT INDICATORS AND DYNAMICS IN THE ZONES**

Zones	Key conflict indicators
<p><b>North East (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe States)</b></p>	<p>The umbrella problem in this zone is the Boko Haram menace which is most evident in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, and Bauchi States. The security threats include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attack on individuals, security officials (most especially army and police), public buildings etc. This includes both sniper attacks and suicide bombings;</li> <li>• Hired assassinations/political killings</li> <li>• Attacks on communication facilities. (Boko Haram allege that these facilities are being used to monitor their movements);</li> <li>• Alleged illegal arrests and detentions of community members by the security operatives</li> <li>• Alleged extra judicial killings by security agencies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>North West (Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara states)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kano and Kaduna experience the Boko haram threat: sniper and suicide attacks, attack on communication facilities. Some of those arrested have been found to be non-Nigerians. The perpetrators use cars to attack buildings and facilities and use motorcycles to attack individuals or outpost police station.</li> <li>• The Kaduna dimension of the problem has ethnic and religious coloration. Currently there is a deep-rooted division between the Christians and Muslims evident in the way and manner the citizens now settle along religious lines “Mecca for Muslims – Northern Kaduna and Jerusalem for Christians – Southern Kaduna”</li> <li>• Zamfara is riddled with armed robbery and communal crisis</li> <li>• In Sokoto, Boko Haram targets Police headquarters and barracks but not individuals as experienced elsewhere.</li> <li>• Jigawa, Katsina and Kebbi are not affected by the Boko Haram crisis but isolated cases of criminality and tribalism.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> For background information on the group see Andrew Walker, “What is Boko Haram”, *Special Report 308, Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace, June 2012*; J. Peter Pham, “Boko Haram's evolving threat”, *Africa Security Brief*, No. 20, Washington DC: Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, April 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Global IDP, Data base of the Norwegian Refugee Council Associated Press, December 19, 2002; CNN, March 23, 2003.

3.0 KEY CONFLICT INDICATORS AND DYNAMICS IN THE ZONES *contd*

Zones	Key conflict indicators
<b>North Central (Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nassarawa, Niger and Plateau States)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The conflict between pastoralists and local farmers is very prevalent in the zone most especially in Benue, Nassarawa, and Plateau States. This is due to dwindling grazing lands/grazing routes. Many of these routes have been turned into farmlands. Also traditional leaders allegedly collect money from pastoralists for temporary grazing. The pastoralists often misinterpret this as land purchase.</li> <li>Boko haram struck on a number of occasions in Niger and Kogi States.</li> <li>The Jos crisis that continues to take human lives is attributed to ethnic and indigene-settler cleavages. The primary conflict actors are the Jasawa and the ethnic Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere. Contestation over indigeneship and competition for the resources provided to local government authorities (LGAs) undermine systems for conflict management in Jos, while fueling grievances and providing incentives for the violent continuation of conflict. Exacerbating the conflict further is a lack of opportunity, outside indigeneship, and control of LGA resources for economic advancement and security. Additionally, a growing culture of impunity challenges attempts to reign in violence,</li> <li>Too many roadblocks including unofficial ones in this zone endangers human security and exposes the military to bribery and corruption as they now collect “toll fees” from commuters</li> <li>Alleged extra judicial arrests and killings by security operatives.</li> </ul>
<b>South East (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States)</b>	<p>The most prevalent problems in the zone are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kidnapping and hostage taking;</li> <li>The reinforced commitment of the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) to the creation of a Biafran State evident in its affiliation to the Federation of Free States of Africa;</li> <li>Alleged illegal arrest and execution of MASSOB members by the police;</li> <li>Communal conflicts around land issues, and political assassinations especially relating to new and old political dynasty.</li> <li>School Cultism and gangsterism</li> </ul>
<b>South West (Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States)</b>	<p>The problems here include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The incessant violent clash between factions of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW);</li> <li>Kidnapping in Ekiti and Ogun States;</li> <li>Vandalisation of oil pipelines in Ogun State and the killings of security operatives assigned to protect the pipelines;</li> <li>The “regional integration” agenda of the Governors of Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ekiti and Osun States which some people interpret as the Yoruba’s preparations for “exiting from the Nigerian state”;</li> <li>The urban renewal projects in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ekiti and Osun States which is displacing people from the informal sector unto criminal activities especially armed robbery;</li> <li>Challenges associated with rural –urban migration in Lagos State;</li> <li>Electoral violence and the activities of the Odua People’s Congress (OPC) in most of the states of South West.</li> </ul>
<b>South South (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo and Rivers State)</b>	<p>The problems here include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gradual return of youth militancy in Rivers, Delta and Bayelsa State;</li> <li>Young people who did not benefit from the amnesty programme are now establishing their own gangs as they see the rehabilitated warlords who benefited as heroes;</li> <li>Oil pipelines are attacked; sea piracy is increasing and this threatens both fishing and shipment of oil;</li> <li>Youth engaged in burning of diesel for oil (private refinery of oil) create new health problems by the fumes from their “refineries”;</li> <li>Kidnapping and armed robbery are very high in most states of the zone ;</li> <li>Conflict over the control of oil-rich land among communities and control of oil-wells between states</li> <li>The security operatives in the geo-political zone accentuate the insecurity through some of their actions as a way of legitimizing their continued stay in the area (part of the economies of conflict).</li> </ul>

**“It is not possible to address digital crime through analog policing”**

## 4.0 KEY CONFLICT ACCELERATING FACTORS

The above security challenges are further compounded by multi-dimensional factors that continue to accelerate the conflict situation:

- **Unemployed and Unemployable Youths:** Nigerian youths constitute one third of the current population at 33% and over half of the unemployed population at 50%. A significant portion of this group is classified as vulnerable as they lack educational background as well as limited vocational skills. They are seen in major cities and towns operating motorbikes “OKADA”, in schools as members of cult groups and on the streets begging for alms as “almajiris”<sup>3</sup>. This level of vulnerability means that they can be lured into societal destabilizing conflicts including Boko Haram insurgency, political thuggery, kidnaping, oil bunkering and other forms of menace
- **Proliferation of Arms, Extremist Groups and Porous Borders:** Nigeria accounts for at least 70 per cent of the illegal small arms and light weapons (SALW) circulating within the West African sub-region... The revelation

elements and arms in and out of these neighboring countries. Several arrests in the past reveal that most of the members of Boko Haram are nationals of these countries who partner with their Nigerian counterparts in the execution of what they consider to be similar ideologies in and around the Sahel. Even though a number of arrests of suspected members of the Boko Haram have been made, security operatives are still challenged by the inability to identify the kingpins of the group as they operate in very clandestine manner.

- **The Mali Insurgency and Fallout from Libya:** Nigerian government has maintained that Boko Haram has links with international jihad networks, especially al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), one of the leading elements among Mali's Islamic insurgency. And the Malian government has equally used that claim as a basis of requests for outside help. In one of the interviews granted by President Goodluck Jonathan to CNN, he alluded

(MNLA) and members of Boko Haram. These international dimensions and connections continue to pose challenges to the security architecture in Nigeria especially as Boko Haram is constantly being funded and supported with all forms of arms and trainings.

- **Unmet Expectations from the Amnesty Program:** After several years of battle between the Niger Delta Militants or “Freedom Fighters” as they prefer to be addressed, it was clear by



Nigerian militant youth display weapons surrendered by former militants at an arms collection centre (Source - REUTERS / THE BIGGER PICTURE)

the end of 2008, that force and military actions alone were not enough to combat youth insurgency in the region. To this end, the then government of

**“The security operatives are even more exposed to dangers than the people – the question then is who guards the guard?”**

came from the Chief of Army Standards and Evaluation, Major-General Shehu Abdulkadir at the 7th Annual Ramadan lecture of Muslim Media Practitioners of Nigeria in Abuja. The army chief went on to disclose that Nigeria “is both a producer and consumer of SALW in the West African region.” He noted further that while it was difficult to determine the exact quantity of illegal SALW circulating within or coming into the country, “it is estimated that over 70 per cent of 8 to 10 million illegal weapons in West Africa are in Nigeria”<sup>4</sup>. With the porous nature of most Nigerian states (especially north east, north west and north central), bordered by Niger, Cameroon and Chad, the country continue to face high levels of insecurity as a result of movement of criminal

to the fact that if Nigeria stabilize northern Mali, it will not only be to the good of the country but also others that are facing threats in and around the Sahel. He further reiterated that the terrorists have no boundaries and therefore do not respect international boundaries. No wonder, there have been very serious allegations of Mali providing the training ground for the members of Boko Haram and in turn receives assistance in the execution of the terrorists act in northern Mali.

Similarly, the end of the Gadhafi regime in Libya also created its own challenges in terms of proliferation of arms and availability of ex-combatants. There has also been an allegation of alliances and inroads being made by National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad

President Musa Yaradua, opted for a “carrot and stick approach” and offered the militants amnesty with a view to rehabilitating and reintegrating them into the society. While a barrage of the militants embraced this, others were skeptical about the intentions of the government and refused to drop their arms.

The refusal of some of the militants to drop their arms then meant that a lot of them were also not part of the amnesty program and thus did not benefit in the largess offered by the program. Today, those ones who were not integrated have become security threats to the region and the country at large. They are making efforts to ensure that they are “heard and adequately compensated” with a new form of amnesty. Secondly,

<sup>3</sup> Chukwuemeka B Eze, Youth Potentials, Challenges and Prospects, Paper presented at a Seminar on Youth Violence in Enugu, December 2012 (Unpublished)

<sup>4</sup> [www.Thisdaylive.com](http://www.Thisdaylive.com)

those who participated in the program had very high hopes that at the end of their vocational trainings, they would readily find lucrative employment but this has been far from being the case as the income they generated as militants is nothing compared with the paltry sums they are often not even sure of. The money-spinning nature of oil bunkering and theft coupled with weak laws governing the seas has not also helped matters and little wonder why piracy and maritime crimes are on the rise in the Gulf of Guinea.

- **Weak Institutions and alleged cases of Corruption:** The problem of weak institutions and corruption in Nigeria creates a security paradox that feeds into the cycle of SALWs proliferation and challenges for the security architecture. Corruption has become institutionalized in both the public and private sectors in the country with the security sector being the most affected. Given prevalent poverty and poor remuneration for security agents, some of them easily get co-opted into the illicit trade and trafficking of small arms and light weapons. On several occasions, security agents have been allegedly aiding arms importation especially from the porous borders and even sometimes compromised their own arms in exchange for pecuniary gains.

The corruption saga is gradually eating into the military sector as most of them posted to conflict zones are now accused of exacerbating the conflicts in order to stay tight in the conflict locations and make “extra cash” even at the detriment of the nation's stability. In the last 14 years, the Nigerian state has not demonstrated its firm control over violence meted against its citizenry and confidence in them continues to diminish by the day. This has also contributed to the widespread emergence of private security and militia groups across the country.

- **Political gerrymandering:** The political intrigues associated with the 2015 elections in Nigeria presents

another major accelerator for conflict in the country. At the federal level, the emerging conflict scenarios build around whether or not President Goodluck Jonathan should get a second term or surrender power to northern Nigerians following a purported “gentleman agreement” as part of the conditions for the President's support during the 2011 election. Scholars and political pundits have described it as a “decisive moment” given the US prediction that the Nigerian state could break up in 2015<sup>5</sup>. Some Nigerians consider the ongoing Boko Haram crisis and its management styles to be related to this regional contest for political power. Other groups in the country, most especially the Igbo of the South East, consider 2015 to be the year when they too would like to produce a President.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS OF NIGERIA SECURITY CHALLENGES FOR THE REGION

Some of the above crisis situations have regional implications in the West African region. Nigeria is strategically placed within the ECOWAS region and any of her crises has the potential of affecting the region. It has already been established that the Boko Haram sect has hideouts in the neighbouring states of Chad, Niger and Cameroun. The country is also bordered by Benin Republic. The border with these states is so porous that arms are ferried into Nigeria through them and this fuels the crisis<sup>6</sup>. Arms from post Gadhafi Libya are alleged to be in the hands of Boko

Haram members. It has also been established that Boko Haram members and the rebels in Mali are already exchanging technical and logistical services. Recently, Nigeria sent some troops as part of the ECOWAS peacekeeping contingent to Mali. The reason adduced for this deployment is that Boko Haram members are in Mali and are fighting alongside the rebels in that country. Analysts have suggested that the setting up of Drone Centre in Niger Republic by the US is not just because of the crisis in Mali but also because of the conflicts in Nigeria. The presence of such centre makes Nigeria a lot more vulnerable to international meddling in the internal affairs of the country.

The kidnaping of some foreigners in Nigeria as well as others outside have been linked to the Boko Haram sect as well as one of its factions known as *Jama'atu Ansarul Musilimina Fi Biladis Sudan*. This kind of situation portends a great danger to the image of Nigeria in the future.

Within the Niger Delta, there has been reported exchange of illegally bunkered oil for arms to the region. In 2012, the Ghana Police Service impounded a truck load of arms and ammunitions in Achimota, Accra, allegedly being



An American hostage is held captive by ethnic Ijaw militants in the volatile creeks of the Niger Delta (February 2006) (Source - REUTERS / THE BIGGER PICTURE)

smuggled to Nigeria from the country by three Ghanaians and two Nigerians<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)

<sup>6</sup> I.O. Albert, “Smuggling second-hand cars through the Benin-Nigeria borders”, in Georges Kobou (ed.), *Real Economies in Africa*, Dakar: Council for the Development of Social and Economic Research in Africa, 2003; I.O. Albert, “Rethinking Small arms and Light Weapons in the Niger Delta”, IDASA Conflict Tracking Dossier, Number 3, 2006 pp. 1-6. So bad is the Nigerian situation that Abdullahi claimed in 2010 that about 70% of the illegal arms in West Africa are in Nigeria. See Abdullahi, B. (2010) “70% of illegal arms in West Africa are in Nigeria—NATFORC boss,” *Daily Trust*, 9 November.

<sup>7</sup> Kate Da Costa, “Ghana: Nigeria-bound weapons intercepted in Accra”, *Daily Trust*, 12 January 2012.

Alongside this free movement of arms into Nigeria is the influx of people with efficiency in arms handling. They come in from Chad and Niger most especially. The current insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, which is closely tied to sea piracy, has a lot to do with the youth in the coastal states of Nigeria. Some of the ex-militants who benefited from the amnesty programme of the federal government seemed to have simply diverted their attacks from oil installations to fishing and oil ships on the high sea. More people have since joined them and this explains the gradual increase in the security threats on the Nigerian waters and other countries in the region.

### 6.0. LIKELY SCENARIOS

From the forgoing, the likely scenarios could be divided into best, worst and realistic case scenarios.

#### Best Case Scenario

- The Nigerian Security architecture as currently constituted overpowers the members of Boko Haram and through eminent northern religious and traditional leaders, the frontrunners of Boko Haram seek

place as the true “giant of Africa.”

#### Realistic Case Scenario

- The pressure on President Goodluck Jonathan not to contest the 2015 presidential election intensifies and the President succumbs to the “blackmail”; this sudden turn in the decision of the president assuages the northern leaders to intervene and prevail on Boko Haram members to drop arms and tow the path of dialogue; (Plausible)
- The Nigerian government seeks the assistance of international community especially the US in combating the menace of Boko Haram and other insurgency in the country including their affiliates in other parts of the region; the extremists succumb to this superior power and lay down their arms; amnesty option is pursued for the leadership of Boko Haram; violence attacks are curtailed ahead of the 2015 general elections (Plausible)
- The opposition political party consolidates its merger plan and presents a credible alternative candidate from the north who defeats the ruling party candidates and breaks the perceived monopoly of People's Democratic Party (PDP)

becomes ungovernable ahead of the 2015 general election (Very Plausible)

- ECOWAS and the international community refuse to sit on the fence and analyze the insecurity problem in Nigeria as having implications for the stability of the region; the sovereignty of Nigeria is compromised and the international community forcefully intervene under the principles of R2P (Plausible)
- The United States prediction<sup>8</sup> of the breakup of Nigeria in 2015 takes place and the country indeed disintegrate along ethnic, regional and religious lines (less plausible)

### 7.0. OPTIONS FOR RESPONSE

In order to comprehensively address the myriads of issues analyzed thus far, the following options for response are proposed:

#### Nigerian Government

- **Review of the current security architecture:** There is need to review the current approach to security in Nigeria. Government need to invest more on comprehensive human

“Coordination among security agents is key to its success or otherwise”

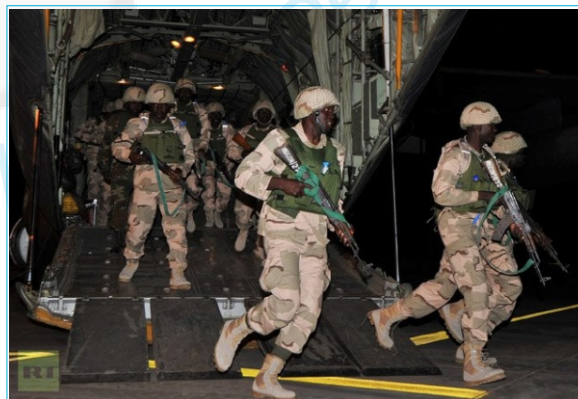
- amnesty from the state and drops their arms
- The Nigerian government seizes the opportunity presented by the ceasefire adduced by members of Boko Haram to address in a comprehensive and sustainable manner, the underlying factors for the insurgencies in the north and other parts of the country.
- The 2015 general election is conducted in an atmosphere of transparency and peace and an acceptable/popular candidate emerges; the country's democracy is further consolidated and the long desired dividends begins to trickle down the ladder; Nigeria's image at the level of international community is enhanced and the country once again takes its rightful

- ECOWAS takes a coordinated approach in the fight against piracy and maritime crimes; common laws to guide operations in the sea is pursued and makes oil bunkering and other crimes reduced to the barest minimum.

security rather than just hardcore security operation; addressing the underlying factors leading to militancy and extremism which includes issues of poverty, participation and good governance is key to addressing the Nigerian security challenges; there is

#### Worst Case Scenario

- The menace of Boko Haram and other insurgency continue unabated; reprisal attacks in most parts of the country begin to manifest; militia groups along ethnic and religious lines continue to spring up “in protest and protection” of its own people and the country



Nigerian Military deployed to Mali

<sup>8</sup> [www.pmnewsnigeria.com](http://www.pmnewsnigeria.com)

need to encourage and partner local actors for community early warning and intelligence gathering as well as better coordination amongst the security apparatus

- **Investment in Security Infrastructures and Capacity Building:** Current security situation in Nigeria demands modern infrastructures and new skills in order to effectively tackle the challenges; there is need to train the security agents and equip them with the needed skills and tools to combat emerging security threats including cyber, maritime, trans-border and other forms of crimes
- **Review of current Laws and policies:** The relevant laws and policies on terrorism, oil bunkering, cyber crimes, money laundering, maritime and piracy needs to be reviewed and implemented to the letter; the delay and bureaucracy associated with the trial of suspected terrorists has been adduced as one of the factors militating against the fight against terrorism in Nigeria; there is also need for collaboration between neighboring countries especially those around the gulf of guinea and Sahel in addressing these new challenges
- **Transparency in governance and conduct of 2015 general election:** The 2015 general election in Nigeria has been identified as a “decisive” moment for the country, efforts should be made to ensure transparency and equal participation of all stakeholders in the election; timely preparations as well as adequate resourcing of the Independent National Electoral Commission; intra party democracy and opinions of minority/vulnerable groups **MUST** be seen to be respected all through the process; above all the government needs to consolidate its fight against corruption and provide the long desired dividends of democracy at all levels
- **Establish and strengthen special institutions:** Government's initiative of establishing Nomadic schools in the north is a welcome idea, the curricular

of those kinds of institutions should be reviewed to reflect the societal exigencies – in the north for example, interfaith peace education will go a long way in addressing the incessant religious intolerance; similar special schools needs to be established in other parts of the country and resourced to develop the skills of the vulnerable groups in order to address peculiar challenges of each of the zone

#### **ECOWAS and International Community**

- **Coordination of Security operations in the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea:** The implication of the current security challenges in Nigeria for the region is grave; ECOWAS member states supported by the rest of international community need to adopt coordinated approaches, including in the management of its borders towards addressing these challenges. It has already been established that there exists linkages in the operations of Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM), the oil thieves and international pirates, international drug barons and illicit arms dealers etc.
- **Funding and Logistical Support:** There is need for ECOWAS and the international community to provide funding and logistical support to Nigeria and other countries in the region currently experiencing various forms of violent extremism especially those in and around the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea

#### **Civil Society organizations**

- **Inter Religious Dialogue:** The leadership of Muslims and Christians need to moderate the activities of fanatics and extremists among them. Interfaith dialogue platforms needs to be strengthened to adequately respond to issues relating to religious intolerance thereby promoting trust, mutual respect and peaceful co-existence
- **Community Early Warning and Early Response:** Civil Society Organizations should take the lead in ensuring that community early warning systems are established and coordinated to provide

timely information to relevant stakeholders. The WANEP National Early Warning System also linked to the ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism should be expanded and supported to promote the culture of conflict prevention at the community levels. Investment should also be made on traditional and community structures to ensure early response to conflict indicators at the local levels. Secondly, CSOs in collaboration with government through the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution should champion the creation and operationalization of a National Architecture for Peace in Nigeria

- **Media Reportage:** The media should be professional in their reportage and ensure that their news and reports is conflict sensitive. The media should act as a vehicle for peace education and social cohesion and eschew all forms of sensationalism

## **8.0. CONCLUSION**

The current security challenges in Nigeria are complex and have implication for the stability of the region. It requires multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approaches – the situation has shown that the use of force alone has its limits. Though the Joint Task Forces are present in Niger Delta and in most states of the north, the problems continue unabated. It therefore means that there is need for other approaches as recommended in this policy including modalities for involving community members and CSOs in security management in Nigeria.

In addressing the immediate challenges, long-term strategies should not be overlooked. The draft National Peace Policy produced by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution should be passed into law and adopted as the instrument for responding to violent conflicts in the country. The Nigerian Peace Policy should inform the establishment of the National Peace Architecture.

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